



Arizona Mexico Plenary Session Rocky Point 2012

**Friday, February 10, 2012
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer**

Let me begin by thanking you, Governor Padres, for being such a gracious host -- and for choosing such a magnificent venue for this plenary session.

I'd also like to thank the leadership of both Commissions:

- Joaquin Cabrera, CSA President;**
- Carlos Portillo, CSA Director;**
- Larry Lucero, AMC President;**
- Margie Emmermann, Policy Adviser & AMC Executive Director;**
- Our AMC Board of Directors;**
- And, the staff of both the AMC and the CSA.**

I'm very excited to once again visit Rocky Point. For years it was my home away from home; back when it was a small local town, with few paved roads, small scale investments, and almost no economic development in the area.

The “new” Rocky Point is a great example of the exciting economic opportunities that this region holds -- with all of its impressive development and beautiful sandy beaches.

That's why I'm especially proud that these Commissions actively engaged in acquiring the appropriate bi-national funds to expand the Lukeville Port of Entry.

Minimizing border wait times will certainly enhance tourism to our region; but we continue to look for ways to strengthen the economic base for Arizona and Sonora – keeping in mind the important role that tourism plays.

For Arizona, Mexican visitors spend an average of \$7.3 million every day in Arizona's stores, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses. For Sonora the same can be said about the value of U.S. tourists that contribute day in and out to their economy.

That's why, earlier today, we engaged in a tourism dialogue -- with public and private industry experts -- to discuss how to revitalize tourism in our region.

Sonora has spectacular destinations with vibrant culture, and, of course, those great beaches that Arizona doesn't have.

But, Arizona does offer unforgettable scenic beauty, world class resorts and amenities, and is home to one of the national wonders of the world, the Grand Canyon.

After today's meeting we're committed to promoting Arizona and Sonora, and focusing on how we can stimulate our border economies.

I recognize that addressing border infrastructure might seem tedious, but I cannot stress enough the importance of having state-of-the-art ports of entry and the access leading up to them. We cannot be competitive without them.

That's why I'm so pleased at the progress being made on Arizona's Border Master Plan – assessing the infrastructure needs of both Arizona and Mexico for the next 30 years.

I commend ADOT Director John Halikowski and his team for leading such an important project, because there is much at stake.

Progress has been made at our international gateways with the funding of the new commercial port of San Luis II and the reconfigured Mariposa.

However, our work is not done, and we need to continue collaborating with our federal partners to find solutions for our other ports that are in great need of upgrades.

Today, we met with stakeholders who have been given the direction of promoting and focusing on initiatives that advance our trade corridors.

Now, more than ever, we must focus on the advantages of our trade corridors and promote them to ensure we sustain and grow our assets as we enter into an extremely competitive era with other heavily invested trade corridors.

The new Mazatlan-Durango highway is scheduled for opening in the first half of this year, potentially diverting flows of traffic from the Sonora-Arizona trade corridor.

This is a perfect occasion for the two states to assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of our corridor and port infrastructure -- with the ultimate goal of increasing economic competitiveness and job creation in our region.

We have long known that we could lose trade to our competitors because of our outdated ports of entry -- and the long waits to cross the border.

Fortunately, our largest commercial crossing at Mariposa will go from 4 to 12 lanes and 4 to 8 commercial inspection lanes this year.

The size of this new port will enable us to effectively compete against other ports along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Although this will greatly improve the situation for Arizona, there are other variables that need to be taken into account if we want to succeed.

For this reason, I have asked the Arizona Department of Transportation to lead a new strategic planning effort by forming a Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance. They will work with the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Arizona Commerce Authority.

The objective of this initiative is to contribute to a jobs and economic development agenda for Arizona by examining current and future infrastructure needs that will improve Arizona's competitive advantages -- in trade -- logistics -- infrastructure -- and energy.

We must be one step ahead of our regional competitors -- and, most importantly, we must be business ready.

This effort will help identify how best to take advantage of our current resources -- as well as infuse investment in a strategic, sustainable and smart way that will increase the capacity of our corridors.

Arizona and Sonora have what it takes to be the leading region for the entry points to the United States and Mexico.

Each example I've shared with you today continues to build on a border region that works – one that is safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable.

Our 53 years of cross-border collaboration have allowed us to build upon success based on the simple understanding that our futures are tied to each other.

I commend each committee co-chair -- and members -- for their determination to improve our region.

Only a region with well-rounded sources can prosper and excel, and that's what you all provide.

I especially want to acknowledge our environment co-chair and ADEQ Director Darwin, as well as the AMC, for the follow-up work after my private meeting at the last plenary session in Phoenix with the International Boundary and Water Commission.

The meeting was to discuss the dire condition of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) and the Nogales Wash.

Since the meeting, we're now getting closer to an engineering study which will be the first step toward a rehabilitation project.

After years of broken promises by the federal government and patched fixes, Arizona has been working hard to make the federal government understand they have a responsibility for the IOI and Nogales Wash.

In a similar effort to promote the needs of our communities as a whole, the AMC will be launching a new web page within the Arizona-Mexico Commission website www.azmc.org to advertise the unified work being supported by each border town.

The progress we've accomplished proves that not only does the AMC bring the right players to the table to dialogue, but we are a commission of action.

Both Governor Padres and I understand that all of these issues are important to the competitiveness – sustainability – security - - and quality of life of each of our states.

And, we're committed to continue this dialogue, as I know you are, too.

So, together, let's continue to promote Arizona and Sonora virtues, values, and opportunities that unite us and fill our future with promise.

Thank you.